

Program in Microbiology and Immunology (PMI)

Updated December 2022

Program director(s)

Robert Binder (supposedly stepping down in summer of 2023)

rjb42@pitt.edu

Zandrea Ambrose (will be taking Dr. Binder's place)

zaa4@pitt.edu

Program coordinator(s)

Kristin DiGiacomo

K.DiGi@pitt.edu

MSTP student representative (point of contact for more information)

Christine Tin (immunology)

cmt106@pitt.edu

Jess Medrano (micro)

jmm458@pitt.edu

Jake Gillis (immunology)

jag341@pitt.edu

Application requirement?

No (but a signed transfer form during the summer must be submitted).

Application details

Transfer form is just a form sent to us from Kathy with signatures from us, PI, department chair, program director

Application deadline

For the transfer form, May 1st (if no 3rd rotation) or August 1st (if doing a 3rd rotation).

Graduate stipend (as of academic year 2022-2023)

\$33,360 (matches SOM guidelines)

Enrichment funds

\$2000 to be spent within the first two years of grad school.

Two \$250 travel awards per month by BGSA (must apply)

Health insurance coverage?

Covered by graduate program with option to enroll in vision/dental for extra \$

Health insurance enrollment deadline

The enrollment period is typically August 1 - September 30

Does health insurance change if student is on a training grant or fellowship?

Yes; students will have to pay for insurance upfront and receive reimbursement from training grant or fellowship

If awarded an F30/1, does the grad program decide how the institutional allowance is spent

If awarded an F30/31, the grad program does not decide anything. The student should refer to grants person in the respective departments (MMG, Immuno, Pediatrics, etc.).

Internal funding sources

Various T32 training grants, including:

1. Immunology of infectious diseases by JoAnne Flynn
2. Viral Persistence and Pathogenesis by Neal DeLuca
3. Cancer Immunology by Dario Vignali
4. Autoimmunity/immunopathology by Penelope Morel
5. Transplant Biology by Angus Thomson
6. Pediatrics has an internal grant through Research Advisory Council

<https://www.pmi.pitt.edu/funding-opportunities>

Incoming graduate student orientation?

Yes. MSTP students should be receiving invites in the summer.

Coursework registration dates

During the first half of August, Kristin DiGiacomo will send an email with the information.

Coursework registration should be done sometime over the summer, once the Graduate Office is able to matriculate the students into the PeopleSoft system and into the Graduate School from the Medical School. However, until the Graduate Office takes care of that process, students cannot enroll.

Course requirements for MSTP

Immuno track

1. Comprehensive immunology course and experimental immunology course (spring of G1)
2. Immunology research seminar (each and every semester)
3. Contemporary topics in immunology (first two semesters; journal club-like course)

Micro track

1. Comprehensive microbiology course and experimental pathogens biology course (spring of G1)
2. Micro Research-in-Progress (RIP) (each and every semester)
3. Micro seminar (first two semesters; not a real course, requirements change but include written summaries of two seminars per semester)

Both tracks

1. 3 elective credits (equivalent to a single course)
2. Med micro TA for MS1s (two spring semesters)
3. Filler credits titled "Directed Study" (before comprehensive exams) or "PhD Dissertation Credits" (after comprehensive exams) to reach 9 total credits for full-time student status

Milestones for MSTP students

1. Passing written/oral comprehensive exam (abstracts due May 1st, full written proposal due May 31st in spring of G1; oral exam in the summer depending on revisions/passing of written proposal)
2. Forming a thesis committee (fall of G1)
3. Holding regular thesis committee meetings before writing and defending (every 6 months)
4. First-author publication and thesis defense to graduate

Required semesterly courses

1. Micro students take Micro Research-In-Progress (RIP) EVERY semester and at least two semesters of micro seminar series
2. Immuno students take immunology research seminar EVERY semester and at least two semesters of Contemporary Topics journal club course

Teaching requirement

Yes; Medical Microbiology course for MS1 students at least two spring semesters. Unclear if new medical school curriculum will remove med micro lab.

How does the graduate program assess whether MSTP students are on track

Yearly program evaluations to be reviewed by PMI director and Associate Director

Required meetings outside of thesis mentor

Thesis Committee meeting every six months after passing comprehensive exams (with a form to be turned into the coordinator from the committee chair after each meeting).